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The Use of Filmstrips as Visual Aids in Christian Work

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THERE are a few eloquent individuals whose graphic words are able to make deep and lasting impressions on their spellbound hearers. They feel no need of artificial helps of any kind. Readers who fall in this class need not waste their time on this article. But for those who feel the need of availing themselves of every means of making their message vivid and real to the hearts of their audience may find here some help in making their "hearers," see-ers as welll.

The use of filmstrips in missionary work seems to be spreading rapidly without need of publicity, but we are glad to accept the invitation to describe briefly the present facilities known to us along this line.

Stereopticons and their accompanying slides have had a long and honorable use in China. Perhaps the briefest description of filmstrips (also variously called "stillfilms," "stills," "picturols," "filmslides," etc.) for those unacquainted with them is that they are the modern equivalent of stereopticon slides. The advocates of filmstrips consider them superior to stereopticon slides on the following points:

First, *cost.* Filmstrips cost 1/10th or less per picture than stereopticon slides.

Second, *weight.* Filmstrips weigh 1/150th less than the old slides.

Third, *size.* Filmstrips occupy 1/50th the space of stereopticon slides.

Fourth, *illumination.* Most filmstrip projectors operate on any current from 6-volt auto battery for rural use, to ordinary 110-volt or 220-volt city current.

Fifth, *ease of making.* Filmstrips are very easily and inexpensively made for any one from ordinary photos of any size; charts, illustrations, or whole pages from books; contact prints from miniature camera films; or original writing or drawing.

A pioneer in China of the use of filmstrips is Arthur O. Rinden, American Board Mission, Diongloh, Fukien. He has made a special study of visual education and for years has used filmstrips in rural evangelistic work. He has produced an excellent, Life-of-Christ strip from Western masters. The late Dr. John Y. Lee organized the Stillfilm Service of the National Committee Y. M. C. A. of China in 1936. A rapidly increasing number of missionaries have been using filmstrips in their work and for sending to their home churches, especially since the establishment of the facilities for producing filmstrips in China, with Chinese titles and adapted to use in this country.

The National Committee Y. M. C. A. Stillfilm Service has been under the direction of Mr. W. F. Lin since the failing health of that able scientist and devoted Christian, Dr. John Y. Lee, caused his withdrawal from active participation. According to the list of films-

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trips issued from that office, there were available on August 31st 42 different titles, covering such subjects as Bible characters, Chinese heroes, Y work, 1,000 character lessons, travel and industry. Most of these filmstrips now cost $3.00. This list may be secured from Mr. Lin.

The Visual Aids Department of the North China Christian Rural Service Union was organized in January, 1938, by the writer and is located at the American Board Mission at Paoting, Hopei. The filmstrips produced fall into two general classes: (1) Scenes of missionary activity intended to make this work more real and concrete to churches and friends in the homelands; (2) Filmstrips designed for use in China in all departments of Christian work,—evangelistic, educational, health, agriculture, etc. The list published on October 1st includes 71 titles, 27 of which are strictly religious in nature and the others dealing with mission work, China views, agricultural improvement, relief projects, etc. In addition a good number of private films have been made for missionaries to use on furlough or to send home to their supporting churches.

The Y. M. C. A. Stillfilm Service and the Visual Aids Department of the N. C. C. R. S. U. cooperate in handling each other's films, which may be ordered from either organization.

The Christian Literature Society is cooperating with the Visual Aids Department of the N. C. C. R. S. U. in permitting the reproduction of some of its literature in the form of filmstrips. Especially valuable in teaching the life of Jesus are the filmstrips on "Pictorial Life of Our Savior," illustrated by excellent Chinese artists. Each picture describes a step in the life of Christ and is accompanied by simple poem in 7. 7. 7. 7. meter, which can be explained and then sung by the audience. A very useful series in children's meetings are the Bible Booklets for Small People, illustrated by Elsie Anna Wood and others, containing both picture and Chinese text on one frame.

Harold Copping's excellent paintings, published by the Religious Tract Society, are reproduced in a series of five filmstrips on the Life of Christ, one on The Parables, and one on Paul of Tarsus.

Hand-colored Filmstrips. The Visual Aids Department is now able to announce that it is able to supply filmstrips painted by hand in transparent water colors. The bright colors naturally add much to the attractiveness and lifelikeness of the scenes and add but 50% to the cost. Most of the religious and many of the other films may be ordered in hand-painted colors.

Missionary Work Made Real to Home Friends. It is our conviction that missionary work has only to be seen and known to make its appeal and bring full-hearted support. Next to an actual visit to the mission field, pictures with clear explanations will bring home most vividly and interestingly the actual facts. Fourteen missionaries going on furlough this year had made by the Visual Aids Department and took with them filmstrips of their work. Among these were Commissioner Benwell of the Salvation Army, who took

home five long series on Army work. Dr. John H. Wylie of the Presbyterian Mission ordered three strips on his hospital and anti-tuberculosis work. Dean Stanley Wilson of the Department of Sciences of Yenching University had made five strips of Yenching and his work. Other missionaries on the field are making a practice of sending regular or occasional filmstrips to their supporting churches, accompanied by an explanatory manual for the use of the speaker. Mr. G. Gordon Mahy, of the American Presbyterian Mission at Weihsien, Shantung, has just sent to his home church his annual strip, this being entitled "Our Fourth Year in China," full of interesting views of family and work.

From a financial viewpoint alone, such a cultivation of our friends and supporters at home will doubtless bring rich rewards in increased gifts, not to mention more intelligent interest. A filmstrip sent to a supporting church by the writer, describing relief work in China, has just brought in a check for U. S. $300.00.

Filmstrips manufactured abroad. There are literally thousands of titles on every conceivable subject available from firms in America and England. One catalog before us as we write is entitled "Library of Religious Filmslides" and contains well over 1000 strips. It is published by the Society for Visual Education, 100 East Ohio Street, Chicago, Ill., U. S. A. This same firm has another catalog of some 2000 "Educational Picturols." Any of the products of this firm may be purchased through the Visual Aids Department of the N. C. C. R. S. U. at a discount of 33 1/3rd % to missionaries. A recent shipment of 880 filmstrips to this Department are now available at 50% discount, "as long as they last."

Projectors. These may also be purchased through the same channel and catalogs and details will be furnished on application. The most modern and satisfactory projector, of which 23 have been supplied to missionaries, schools, churches and hospitals, is the Model CC Projector of the Society for Visual Education, the price of which is U.S $37.50,-to missionaries U.S. $25.00. These projectors come in a small case 10×8×4 inches. The complete outfit weights 5 pounds and can be carried in a knapsack.

Color Film Slides. For those of our readers who are miniature camera enthusiasts, or are interested in color film such as Kodachrome, Dufaycolor and Agfa Color, we may add that the serviceable Model CC mentioned above is fitted with a slide carrier to take 2 x 2-inch glass slides, either in color or black-and-white. It is also equally adapted to single and double frame filmstrips. Hence its name "Tri-Purpose Projector."

Illumination for Rural Use. Many missionaries working in rural areas, or in cities not electrified, at once inquire now these projectors may be used under such conditions. The problem of lighting has variously been solved as follows:

1. The Society for Visual Education supplies for U.S. $1 extra a battery connection cord for its projectors and this is very easily connected to the terminals of a car battery or any 6-volt storage

battery. This feeds a 50-watt lamp which is sufficient for ordinary use. Those who are so fortunate as to own cars, or who have means of recharging such batteries, may prefer such an arrangement.

2. Mr. Arthur Rinden, referred to above as our China pioneer in visual education, has satisfactorily solved the problem of light for rural use by using a Coleman Lantern, burning kerosene or gasoline under pressure with a mantle. This is adapted to the regular S.V.E. projector after removing the lamphouse containing the electric bulb.

3. Acetelene burners can be made to replace the electric lamphouse. The writer used one of these for years but has now turned to method No. 2.

Folder on Visual Education. For those who desire a mine of information on visual education, packed into a small compass, we recommend a manual entitled "Visual Education In Rural And Foreign Communities." We understand that this was a study made toward a M. A. thesis by Mr. W. E. Tabb, a missionary stationed at Ganta M. E. Mission, Liberia, West Africa. It is Mimeograph Series No. 63 published by the Agricultural Missions Foundation, 156 Fifth Avenue, New York City.

At Your Service. We can speak assuredly for the Visual Aids Department of the North China Christian Rural Service Union, and feel sure that this applies equally to the Stillfilm Service of the Y. M. C. A., in stating that these departments are organized as a distinct piece of Christian service and are not on a commercial basis. We will be glad to provide filmstrips from our stock or to manufacture them at cost prices, to assist in providing projectors or filmstrips from abroad at substantial discounts. Such information as is deired will be cheerfully supplied to the extent of our ability.